

1 **The Southwest Area Mobilization Guide is a supplement to the National Mobilization**  
2 **Guide.** In addition, it is an extension of Agency Manual/Handbook Systems, Directives,  
3 and Memorandums relating to logistical support operations to provide policies,  
4 procedures, and organization; a directory and catalog of personnel, equipment, aircraft,  
5 and supplies to assist in obtaining timely and cost-effective incident support services.  
6 Authority for the coordination of fire management activities between Federal and State  
7 agencies in the Southwest Area is outlined in the **Memorandum of Understanding for**  
8 **Formation of the Southwest Coordinating Group.**

9 The geographical boundaries for the Southwest Area include the States of Arizona, New  
10 Mexico, and Federal lands within Texas and Oklahoma eastward to the 100th meridian.  
11 Federal and State land management agencies within the States of Arizona and New  
12 Mexico make up the primary participants in wildland fire management in the Southwest  
13 Area.

#### 14 **Southwest Area Dispatch/Coordination System**

15 Definition, roles, and responsibilities of the Southwest Area Coordination Center (SWCC)  
16 and the interagency dispatch centers were established in June 1986 by an interagency  
17 task force. This study defined uniform roles and responsibilities and the  
18 dispatch/logistical coordination system for a National multilevel dispatch/coordination  
19 organization. Specific roles and responsibilities of the SWCC have been developed and  
20 identified, based on national definitions. The roles and responsibilities of the local  
21 interagency dispatch centers have also been specifically identified in order to fully  
22 understand the dispatch/coordination system for the Southwest Area.

23 The Southwest Area wildland fire dispatch and coordination system operates within a  
24 three level (tier) system as identified in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire  
25 Aviation Operations Chapter 19-2.

#### 26 **Scope of Operation**

27 The Southwest Area (SWA) wildland fire management agencies are obligated through  
28 departmental policy and interagency agreements to respond primarily to wildfire  
29 emergencies, but are also capable of response and support for other emergency  
30 incidents, i.e., floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. The management policies for all  
31 agencies also require that agreements be pursued with cooperators at all levels "...to  
32 facilitate efficient fire management activities within and adjacent to the agency." A cost-  
33 effective sharing of resources among public agencies is expected by the taxpaying  
34 public, and the agencies fully support this concept.

35 In order to meet these obligations, managers must support the development and  
36 maintenance of fire skills in their personnel. Managers are expected to maintain and

make available those employees with wildland fire skills. The investment in training and experience in these emergency personnel increases with time, as does their managerial ability, making their continued participation an investment in good management.

Mobilizations may involve only a few key skilled individuals or several hundred employees. Responsiveness is essential in either case. Available personnel requested by dispatchers shall be released without delay to satisfy the emergency needs.

In exceptional circumstances, such as multiple geographic area mobilizations, large numbers of qualified personnel are needed, and the resultant impact on normal operations will be great. We recognize the full implications of such actions, but it must be remembered that no agency stands alone. While we may contribute in a given instance, we may be the recipient the next time.

### **Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG)**

The mission of the SWCG is to enhance the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of interagency fire management activities, and response and support of non-fire emergencies. This is accomplished through interpretation of agency policy, providing direction to the Zone Management Groups and the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) for cooperative fire management activities, developing information exchange between agencies, and monitoring and evaluating the performance of the interagency dispatch centers and SWCC. The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) consists of Fire Directors or their representatives from the USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDI National Park Service, USDI Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and the States of Arizona and New Mexico. Roles and responsibilities of the SWCG, SWCC, Zone Coordinating Group, and interagency dispatch centers are included in the Southwest Coordinating Group Handbook.

### **Southwest Area Dispatch Organization**

The principal mission of the Southwest Area dispatch organization is the timely and cost-effective coordination and dispatching of resources to any incident within or outside of the Southwest Area. The dispatch organization in the SWA is delineated into dispatch center response areas, with the interagency dispatch center acting as the focal point for mobilization/demobilization.

These centers are:

<b>Arizona</b>	<b>Unit ID</b>
Arizona Dispatch Center	AZ-ADC
Flagstaff Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-FDC
Phoenix Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-PHC

1	Prescott Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-PDC
2	Show Low Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-SDC
3	Tucson Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-TDC
4	Williams Interagency Dispatch Center	AZ-WDC

5	<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>Unit ID</b>
6	Alamogordo Interagency Dispatch Center	NM-ADC
7	Albuquerque Interagency Dispatch Center	NM-ABC
8	Santa Fe Interagency Dispatch Center	NM-SFC
9	Silver City Interagency Dispatch Center	NM-SDC
10	Taos Interagency Dispatch Center	NM-TDC

### 11 **Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC)**

12 The Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) is the focal point for providing direction and  
 13 assistance in the mobilization and demobilization of resources between dispatch centers  
 14 within the Southwest Area and, as necessary, the National Coordination Center (NICC).  
 15 The SWCC requests support from the National Coordination Center when area resources  
 16 are unavailable or committed.

### 17 **Southwest Coordination Center Web Site**

18 The SWCC Web site was originally developed in 1997 as an interagency incident support  
 19 Web site designed to be a source for operational and administrative products and links  
 20 for the wildland fire community in the Southwest Area and general incident information  
 21 for the public. Most of the reports, briefings, news releases, etc., produced by the SWCC  
 22 are posted to the site. Units are encouraged to check the site for information prior to  
 23 calling the SWCC for a specific document or report.

24 The SWCC Web site address is: **<http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/>**

25 The site follows the national template for Geographic Area Coordination Centers and is  
 26 delineated into five primary areas:

- 27 1. **Incident Information:** This area provides information on wildland fires greater  
 28 than 100 acres, news releases, fire restrictions and closures, among others. Its  
 29 primary targeted audience is the general public.
- 30 2. **Logistics Operations:** This area details specific logistics / dispatch functions. The  
 31 links on these pages are primarily administrative. Its primary targeted audience is  
 32 the dispatch/coordination system community in the Southwest Area.

1       **3. Predictive Services:** This area is intended to be the operational portion of the  
2       Web site. The links on these pages provide reports, briefings, and outlooks  
3       produced by the SWCC Predictive Services Unit (Intelligence, Fire Weather, and  
4       Fire Behavior). Its primary targeted audience is the wildland firefighting  
5       community in the Southwest Area.

6       **4. Fire Management & Administration:** This area details general incident and  
7       general fire management activities outside the scope of daily operations.

## 8       **5. Related Links**

9       Since the majority of the SWCC Web site is intended for an interagency audience,  
10       specific agency documents will not be posted to the site unless the document is directed  
11       toward two or more agencies. If you have questions, comments, or a request for posting  
12       documents to the site, contact the SWCC Intelligence Operations Coordinator.

13       The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG), which includes a link to the MAC Group  
14       Web site, can be accessed via the SWCC Web site under the “Fire Management &  
15       Administration” heading.

## 16       **Interagency Dispatch Centers**

17       Interagency Dispatch Centers support all agencies within a pre-identified area and have  
18       initial attack authority on units within its sphere of influence, as agreed to by  
19       cooperating agencies. An interagency dispatch center has the responsibility for  
20       providing project fire support to units they dispatch, and to request support from the  
21       Area Coordination Center when resources within the zone are unavailable or exhausted.  
22       These centers are responsible for coordinating the mobilization/demobilization of  
23       firefighting resources between the interagency dispatch centers and the National  
24       Coordination System.

## 25       **Expanded Dispatch Organizations**

26       During periods of multiple fires and/or large fires, it rapidly becomes necessary to  
27       separate the initial attack dispatching function from the organization supporting these  
28       fires. Activation of an Expanded Dispatch Organization should be preplanned. Adequate  
29       working space with all required communication equipment and trained personnel  
30       should be pre-identified.

31       Depending on the complexity of the situation, all functional areas and support level  
32       positions shown may or may not need to be filled. (Example - Coordinator may be able  
33       to handle the entire job and the supervisory dispatcher position may not be needed.)  
34       Demobilization activities are normally performed by this same organization.

## **Duties of Expanded Dispatch Coordinator**

The Expanded Dispatch Coordinator serves as a facilitator in accomplishing the direction of the Agency Administrator. The individual filling the position is key and, depending on the complexity of the situation, may be filled by the person normally managing the day-to-day operations of the center or may be an individual from a higher level of management. The Expanded Dispatch Coordinator is responsible for filling and supervising necessary positions, as needed, in accordance with coordination complexity.

## **Facilities and Equipment**

Facilities and equipment for this organization should be pre-identified, procured, and available for immediate setup. The following key items should be provided for:

- Separate from, but accessible to, the initial attack organization
- Adequate office space (lighting, heating, cooling, security)
- Communications equipment (telephone and computer hardware with adequate data storage space, priority use, and support personnel)
- Area suitable for briefings (Agency Administrators, media).
- Timetable/schedule implemented and adhered to (shift changes, briefings, strategy meetings).

## **Incident Priorities and Values at Risk**

When competition for resources between zones/dispatch centers occurs, the Southwest Multiagency Coordination Group (MAC) will establish priorities. When requested, dispatch centers will establish priorities for their incidents and wildland fires and report them to the SWCC.

The standard criteria to be used in establishing priorities are:

1. Potential to destroy:
  - A. Human life.
  - B. Property and Resource Values (describe type and value)

Descriptions should include information that accurately measures the value, benefit, or significance of the property or resource. How is the property or resource used and by whom? Is there cultural, historical, or legislated significance?

2. Briefly describe social/political, economic consequences.

3. Resistance to control:

- A. Growth potential.
- B. Difficulty of terrain.

4. Describe the probability of meeting wildland fire objectives within the specified timeframe documented in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).

Prescribed fire and wildland fire will all receive the same consideration when it comes to actual decisions on the assignment of resources.

## **Southwest Area Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group**

### **Mission**

Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group provides a forum to discuss actions to be taken to ensure that an adequate number of resources are available to meet anticipated needs and to allocate those resources most efficiently during periods of shortage.

The **Multi-Agency Coordination Group** forum will ensure for coordinated:

- Incident prioritization
- Resource allocation, relocation, and acquisition
- Contingency planning
- State and Federal disaster response
- Information provided to media and Agency leadership
- Identification and resolution of issues common to all parties
- Develops procedures to implement National MAC decisions

### **MAC Coordinator**

- Identifies issues needing MAC Group attention
- Obtains appropriate intelligence information necessary to support MAC activities
- Ensures sufficient staff is available to support MAC Group activities
- Ensures adequate and timely identification of specialists needed to support MAC activities
- Facilitates MAC Group meetings
- Documents MAC decisions
- Distributes MAC decisions
- Maintains permanent records of MAC activities
- Supervises the support staff

### **MAC Supporting Specialist**

- Provides the following information to assist MAC members in making their decisions:
  - Current incidents
  - Weather
  - Fire Behavior/Safety
  - Resources - By Incident (On order, filled/unfilled, critical shortages)
  - IC Report
  - Media/VIP issues

- Agency Issues (including National MAC Group)

## Definitions

**Initial Attack** is the first action taken to suppress a wildland fire. This is normally the first operational period. Subsequent supporting actions may be required.

**Contingency Resources** are additional resources that may be needed to maintain a planned prescribed fire within prescription parameters, and/or quickly implement suppression alternatives if the prescribed fire exceeds those parameters.

**Resource Orders** are documents which detail the request and release of responding resources. Mobilized and demobilized resources, as well as the course of action taken, are documented on the same resource order.

**Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS)** is a computer software program developed to automate the ordering, status, and reporting process. It will be used for all resource ordering (i.e. mobilization and demobilization) in the Southwest Area for any incident that exceeds initial attack. Additional information on ROSS can be found on the Internet at <http://ross.nwcg.gov>.

**Interagency Dispatch Center Managers** are responsible for the management and administration of all activities and services relating to the operation of the interagency dispatch center. During day-to-day operations, they receive general supervision and broad direction from the Zone Coordinating Group.

**Interagency Zone Coordinating Groups** have been established for each interagency center (area and zone). The membership of each group will consist of fire managers at each appropriate level. Southwest Area Coordinating Group members are representatives from the FS Regional Office, BIA Area Offices, BLM State Offices, NPS Regional Office, FWS Regional Office, and State Forestry Offices.

**Support Dispatchers** are responsible for the processing of dispatch requests for crews, overhead, aircraft, equipment, and supplies. They are a working assistant to Supervisory Dispatcher (at any level).

**Supervisory Dispatchers** are responsible for the mobilization, reassignment, and demobilization of resources between home units and incidents. They supervise support dispatchers and dispatch recorders in a specific area within an expanded dispatch organization.

**SWCC Center Manager** is responsible for the management and administration of all activities and services relating to the operation of the Southwest Coordination Center. The manager receives general direction from the Southwest Coordinating Group.



**SWCC Coordinator-On-Duty (COD)** is responsible to the SWCC Center Manager for operations, planning, and administration of center activities and services relating to the operation of the Southwest Area Coordination Center. A COD shall always be assigned to take emergency calls when the SWCC is closed and shall staff the office as needed during these hours.

**SWCC Predictive Services** is an organizational concept incorporated at the Geographical Coordination Center and National Coordination Center, combining personnel from the Fire Intelligence Section, Fire Weather Program, and Fire Behavior Center.

**SWCC Predictive Services Group Leader** manages the Predictive Services Group and staff and is responsible for long-range and short-range fire weather/fire danger products, RAWs coordination, and validation of fire weather products.

**SWCC Intelligence Operations Coordinator** manages the Intelligence Section and its support services staff and is responsible for, among others, the situation reporting program, incident status summaries, fuels data, resource status reports, fire activity outlooks, and oversees management of the SWCC Web site.

**SWCC Fire Information Coordinator** manages the information desk, staffing it directly or supervising detailers to work the information desk as the fire season progresses.

**SWCC Information Desk** is seasonally staffed from March to September. A public information officer (PIO) is ordered to the SWCC on a detail basis as the fire season progresses. The PIO is qualified at the Type 1 or Type 2 level and works with the SWCC, interagency dispatch centers, SWA incident management teams to gather information. Primary duties include providing requested statewide or SWA-wide information on wildland fires to Southwestern news media, assisting with VIP and Congressional visits, and responding to internal agency and Departmental data requests from national, regional, and state levels of Southwest Coordinating Group member agencies.

**Training Specialists** – Identifies Priority Trainee (PT) opportunities within the IMT roster prior to and during incident assignments. Communicates regularly with the GATR and SWCC to ensure these opportunities are communicated and ample assignments given for PTs.

Coordinates with other TNSPs, the GATR, and SWCC to reassign trainees from one incident to another, when there is opportunity. Captures incident/trainee data and summarizes it for the GATR in the form of reports and spreadsheets. Matches trainees with qualified trainers and ensures a performance evaluation is completed. Reviews team rosters and IAPs to identify trainees that may not have signed up with the Training Specialist. Develops a positive relationship with the Ordering Manager to facilitate the placement of trainees.



1 Ensures the GATR and Zone Training Representative is notified when a trainee is  
2 recommended for certification by an evaluator.

3 **Zones** are a defined geographic section of land based on logical sources of firefighting  
4 resources and transportation. Each zone may have one or more interagency dispatch  
5 centers within it. Fire management decisions are closely coordinated amongst all  
6 agencies within a zone under the direction of a Zone Coordinating Group.

## 7 **Wildland Fire Related Ordering**

8 **Initial Attack Dispatching** - During the initial attack (IA) response to an incident, a  
9 dispatch center may utilize the resources within its response area and/or the closest  
10 resources from an adjacent center (see “Neighborhood Policy,” page 27). ROSS is not  
11 necessarily required when ordering local agency resources during IA, but is required  
12 when there are charges to the incident associated with the resource, i.e. aircraft and/or  
13 non-local personnel. In the event a fire goes to extended attack and the dispatch center  
14 needs to pull resources from other areas, an expanded dispatch may be set up. Release  
15 of resources committed to an incident will follow the same channels through which the  
16 resources were committed. Attempts should be made to enter orders into ROSS as soon  
17 as possible in the event an incident requires the assistance of non-local resources. The  
18 SWCC will be notified when national resources are committed within a zone or via the  
19 neighborhood.

20 **Extended Attack Dispatching** - For extended attack incidents, units will use the  
21 established dispatch channels, utilizing ROSS thru or use of the Neighborhood (page 27).  
22 It is imperative that follow up phone calls and documentation be made on resource  
23 orders passed in ROSS.

24 **Assigning Resources to Wildland Fires in the Southwest Area** - Commensurate with  
25 conditions and availability of resources, travel times, transportation available, allowable  
26 response times, training needs, and known capabilities, the SWCC shall fill resource  
27 requests with resources closest to the incident. The SWCC shall notify the requesting  
28 dispatch center when a needed resource is not available within the Southwest Area and  
29 the order must be placed with the NICC. The requesting unit, at that point, shall have  
30 the option to have the order placed up to the NICC, modify the order, or cancel it.

31 **Assigning the Resource to an Out-of-Area Wildland Fire** - ROSS requests from other  
32 GACCs shall come from the NICC to the SWCC. These requests shall be distributed  
33 among dispatch centers within the Southwest Area commensurate with availability,  
34 allowable response times, travel, and known capabilities.

**Notification of Shortage of Resources** – The SWCC shall keep all dispatch centers alerted to possible shortages of firefighting forces nationally, as well as within the Southwest Area. This will be accomplished through conference calls as needed.

**Procedures for Movement of Resources** - The dispatch centers and SWCC are required to send travel information on most all resources via ROSS. Once the dispatch center creates the travel in ROSS, it will automatically be sent directly to the receiving agency. For the movement and tracking of aircraft, see Aircraft Chapter 50.

**Interagency Standards for the ROSS Operations Guide (ISROG)** – The standard business practices for using ROSS within the interagency business community. This guide shall be utilized by ROSS operators when generating requests. This document is updated annually and can be found at: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/references.htm>

### **Non-Wildland Fire Ordering**

The SWCC will accept requests for non-suppression incidents (i.e. severity, preparedness, natural disasters, homeland security/defense, etc.).

Southwest Area units will forward a detail request form (see Appendix 1) for preparedness and severity to their respective dispatch center when assignments will exceed 14 days or special instructions exist (i.e. fiscal considerations, special equipment needed, etc.). This form is a required supplemental information worksheet to the standard resource order entered into ROSS. All pertinent items on the form should be completed. This will give the prospective detailer complete information on the requesting unit's needs. All persons filling details from the Southwest Area should have a copy of the completed detail request form before travel is commenced. When the commitment of a resource will exceed 14 days, the request(s) will not be processed without a detail request.

Preposition assignments may be prearranged between units. No movement will be initiated until the request is placed through the dispatch system, stating that the request has been prearranged with another unit. This typically excludes National type resources, unless previously arranged through SWCC or specific agency objectives are achieved. Prepositioning of resources within the dispatch center response area for IA will be tracked within the requesting unit's dispatch, but does not need to be placed in ROSS.

When the request is filled, the SWCC recommends the sending and receiving units coordinate and resolve administrative and personnel matters.

Travel itineraries will be relayed through ROSS.

1 **Prescribed Fire** - The fire manager is responsible for securing resources for the  
2 prescribed fire project. However, the SWCC will assist the manager, by working through  
3 the dispatch center, in getting a resource through the system.

4 The SWCC should not be involved in filling requests for detailers for other functional  
5 assignments; e.g., for timber, range, or other functions.

## 6 **Dispatch Ordering Channels**

### 7 **Southwest Area Dispatch Center Neighborhood Policy**

8 Interagency dispatch centers within the Southwest Area can engage in resource  
9 ordering via the neighborhood policy (excludes national resources). The neighborhood  
10 policy applies to initial attack, extended attack, project fires, prescribed fire, all risk, and  
11 other types of incident ordering. See next page:

\*National type resources (Incident Management Teams, T-1 crews, T-1 or 2 Airtankers and Very Large Airtankers, T-1 or 2 helicopters, smokejumpers, etc.) are not part of the neighborhood and can be mobilized by placing orders through the SWCC.

The following table identifies the neighborhood for each dispatch center:

Dispatch Center	Can Order Directly From . . .
Alamogordo	Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Silver City
Albuquerque	Alamogordo, Flagstaff, Santa Fe, Show Low, Silver City, Taos
Arizona	Flagstaff, Phoenix, Prescott, Show Low, Tucson, Williams
Flagstaff	Albuquerque, Arizona, Phoenix, Prescott, Show Low, Williams
Phoenix	Arizona, Flagstaff, Prescott, Show Low, Tucson
Prescott	Arizona, Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, Williams
Santa Fe	Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Taos
Silver City	Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Show Low, Tucson
Show Low	Albuquerque, Arizona, Flagstaff, Phoenix, Silver City, Tucson
Taos	Albuquerque, Santa Fe
Tucson	Arizona, Phoenix, Prescott, Show Low, Silver City
Williams	Arizona, Flagstaff, Prescott

Dispatch centers may only dispatch those resources that are normally assigned within their unit. Dispatch centers may not reassign their neighbor's resource outside the zone without prior approval from the resource's home dispatch center.

Although neighborhood ordering is not required, dispatch centers should attempt to place orders for available resources from their neighbors prior to placing orders with the SWCC.

The SWCC may elect to terminate the neighborhood policy when competition and incident prioritization arises, regardless of PL level. All center managers will be consulted regarding this decision.

**\*Any agreements with centers outside the Southwest Geographic Area are stand-alone agreements and are not affected by the neighborhood policy.**

## Resource Tracking

**Commitment of Resources** - Sending unit will relay estimated time of departure (ETD) and estimated time of arrival (ETA) on resources assigned in the travel portion of ROSS. Once resources are committed, they are considered resources of the requesting unit.

**Check-in Responsibilities** - All resources in travel status will be responsible for checking in to the receiving unit/incident in a timely manner. The check-in responsibilities for aircraft, along with their support vehicles is in "Aircraft," section of this guide. Appendix 12 covers flight manager responsibilities.

**Confirming Arrival of Resources** - Receiving units are responsible for confirming arrival of resources and initiating tracking if the resources do not arrive on schedule.

## Incident Operations Driving Guidelines

The Southwest Area shall abide by the driving policy as stated in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations chapter 7-8.

This policy addresses driving by personnel actively engaged in wildland fire suppression or all-risk activities; including driving while assigned to a specific incident (from check in to check out) or during initial attack fire response (includes time required to control the fire and travel to a rest location).

Agency resources assigned to an incident or engaged in initial attack fire response will adhere to the current agency work/rest policy for determining length of the duty day.

No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any duty day.

Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours.

A driver shall drive only if they have had at least 8 consecutive hours off duty before beginning a shift. Exception to the minimum off-duty hour requirement is allowed when essential to:

- Accomplish immediate and critical suppression objectives
- Address immediate and critical firefighter or public safety issues

As stated in the current agency work/rest policy, documentation of mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue is required for drivers who exceed 16-hour work shifts. This is required regardless of whether the driver was still compliant with the 10-hour individual (behind the wheel) driving time limitations.

*The Southwest Area discourages any travel taking place between the hours of 2200 and 0500 unless there are extenuating circumstances to justify travel between these hours.*

*These circumstances are situations where life and/or property are imminently threatened or the incident is occurring within the resource's general response area and minimal travel distance is required to reach the incident. Ultimately, the responsibility for preventing and managing fatigue rests with the supervisor and resources involved.*

### **Standard Cubes, Weight, and Gear Policy for All Personnel**

All personnel dispatched off their unit must conform to the following limitations:

- One frameless, soft pack, not to exceed 45 pounds.
- Web gear or briefcase (not both) not to exceed 20 pounds.
- Maximum allowable crew weight, including equipment, is 5,300 pounds.
- All personnel baggage weights must be displayed separately from individual weights on flight manifests.

### **Rental Car Guidelines**

Federal employees in official travel status who are authorized to rent vehicles from participating rental car companies are covered under an agreement administered by the Department of Defense. This agreement provides a government employee with such things as Government rates and loss or damage coverage (when operating legally and within the scope of government duties). A Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) fee is included as part of the contract with the renter when the reservation is made under the government rate.

Rental car authorizations must be documented in the "Special Needs" or documentation portion of an individual's resource order. If AD personnel are authorized a rental car and make their own reservation, they must ensure that they notify the Rental Car Agent that they are hired by the Federal Government and to include the GARS fee as part of the rate. This will then provide the same coverage as regular Government employees receive. Federal, State, and AD employees must rent the least expensive class of vehicle unless otherwise justified in the resource order.

Operation of a rental vehicle under this agreement occurring off of paved, graded, Federal, state, or professionally maintained roads which results in loss or damage is not covered unless the company has agreed to such operation in writing at the time of rental. The AGENT AT THE RENTAL COUNTER CAN APPROVE OFF-ROAD USE and it MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN WRITING on the rental agreement. Typically, incident camps are located on graded or paved roads, therefore, loss or damage would be covered; however, spike camps or unimproved, "two-track" roads around incidents may not be automatically covered under the provisions of the agreement, unless agreed and documented at the time of rental.



Federal employees and Federal ADs are required to take a defensive driving course every 3 years when driving Federal fleet vehicles or rental cars. State agencies and cooperators have required guidelines as well and these requirements must be followed when driving on incidents. There are several approved defensive driving courses available; some are instructor led and others are available online. Check with your agency for approved courses.

### **Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Use/Cost Comparison Requirements**

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) guidance for all federal agencies is as follows:

- A cost comparison between a privately owned vehicle (POV) and a rental vehicle for use during temporary duty (TDY) is now required, FTR 301-10.309-301-10.3
- Travelers who are authorized to use a rental vehicle for TDY must use the least expensive compact car available unless an exception is approved, FTR 301-10.450
- Travelers cannot be reimbursed for purchasing pre-paid refueling options for rental vehicles, FTR 301-70.102

ROSS resource requests stating POV authorized in documentation or special needs indicate that the receiving unit has approved; however, the sending unit/resource has the ultimate responsibility in determining the method of travel that is least cost to the government. If a POV has been determined to be the least costly and is authorized, sending dispatch offices must indicate that a cost comparison was done and is on file. If POV is authorized and determined to be least cost to the government, the resource may still elect to travel via other means in accordance with a cost benefit analysis, such as rental car, government vehicle, etc.

Links to the USFS Cost Comparison Worksheet and a helpful Cost Benefit Analysis Tool can be found below:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/fire/incident-business/documents/10-20150428-FS-CostComparisonDraftForm.pdf>

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/dispatch\\_logistics/dispatch/forms/POV-Rental\\_Cost\\_Comparison\\_PopUp.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/dispatch_logistics/dispatch/forms/POV-Rental_Cost_Comparison_PopUp.htm)

### **Fire Suppression Work/Rest Guidelines**

Management of crew, overhead, and support personnel must abide by the work/rest guidelines to assure a safe, productive operation. Safety is the responsibility of all incident personnel and the following guidelines shall be used to meet work/rest requirements for all incident personnel.

To assist in mitigating fatigue, days off are allowed during and after assignments. If necessary to reduce fatigue, the Incident Commander (IC) or Agency Administrator (AA) (incident unit) may provide time off supplementary to mandatory days off requirements. For Type 3-5 incidents, paid days off should be rare exceptions. However, if necessary, the Agency Administrator (incident host or home unit) may authorize days(s) off with pay.

The IC or AA authority to grant a day off with pay lies within 5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610.301-306, and 56 Comp. Gen. Decision 393 (1977). Reference the “Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook” (IINMHB), Chapter 10.

Work/rest guidelines should be met on all incidents.

Plan for and ensure that all personnel are provided a minimum 2:1 work to rest ratio (for every 2 hours of work or travel, provide 1 hour of sleep and/or rest).

Work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception, and no work shift should exceed 24 hours. However, in situations where this does occur (for example, initial attack), incident management personnel will resume a 2:1 work/rest ratio as quickly as possible.

The Incident Commander or Agency Administrator must justify work shifts that exceed 16 hours and those that do not meet 2:1 work to rest ratio. Justification shall be documented in the daily incident records. Documentation will include mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue.

The Time Officer’s/Unit Leader’s approval of the Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288), or other agency pay document, certifies that the required documentation is on file and no further documentation is required for pay purposes.

The work/rest guidelines, as noted above, do not apply to aircraft pilots assigned to an incident. Pilots must abide by applicable Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) or agency policy if more restrictive.

### **Length of Assignment**

An assignment is defined as the time period (days) between the first full operational period at the first incident or reporting location on the original resource order and commencement of return travel to the home unit.

Standard assignment length is 14 days, exclusive of travel from and to the home unit, with possible extensions identified below. Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14-day limit, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including incident management teams.

After completion of a 14-day assignment and return to the home unit, 2 mandatory days off will be provided (2 after 14) (State regulations may preclude authorizing this for State employees). Days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following the

return travel in order to be charged to the incident (see Section 12.1-2) (5 U.S.C. 6104, 5 CFR 610.301-306, and 56 Comp. Gen. Decision 393 (1977)). If the next day(s) upon return from an incident is/are a regular work day(s), a paid day(s) off will be authorized.

Pay entitlement, including administrative leave, for a paid day(s) off cannot be authorized on the individual's regular day(s) off at their home unit. Agencies will apply holiday pay regulations, as appropriate. A paid day off is recorded on home unit time records according to agency requirements.

Casuals (AD) are not entitled to paid day(s) off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

Contract resources are not entitled to paid day(s) off upon release from the incident or at their point of hire.

Home unit Agency Administrators may authorize additional day(s) off with compensation to further mitigate fatigue. If authorized, home unit program funds will be used.

Specific flight and crew duty limitations apply to pilots. Vendor pilot assignments are determined by the contract and the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR). Agency pilot and crew duty limitations are determined by agency policy and the FARs.

### **Assignment Extensions**

Prior to assigning incident personnel to back-to-back assignments, their health, readiness, and capability must be considered. The health and safety of incident personnel and resources will not be compromised under any circumstance.

Assignments may be extended when:

- Life and property are imminently threatened
- Suppression objectives are close to being met
- Replacement resources are unavailable, or have not yet arrived

Upon completion of the standard 14-day assignment, an extension of up to an additional 14 days may be allowed (for a total of up to 30 days, inclusive of mandatory days off, and exclusive of travel). Regardless of extension duration, 2 mandatory days off will be provided prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the assignment.

Single Resource Extensions: The Supervisor will identify the need for assignment extension and will obtain the affected resource's concurrence. The Assignment Extension Form (see Appendix 2) will be initiated from the incident and follow the established sequence of approval signatures as identified on the form.

Incident Management Team Extensions: Incident Management Team extensions are to be negotiated between the incident Agency Administrator, the Incident Commander, SWCG, and NMAC (if directed). One extension form for the entire IMT will suffice as

documentation; however it is each IMT member's responsibility to ensure supervisor/home unit concurrence for the extension.

Upon release from the assignment, regardless of extension duration, 2 mandatory days off will be provided immediately following return to the home unit and are chargeable to the incident (Reference IIBMHB Ch. 10). This excludes ADs and Contract Resources.

IBPA and Incident Only EERA resources are subject to length of assignment guidelines. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure compliance of personnel regarding assignment length and work rest ratio. Extensions of these resources shall follow the same process as Single Resource extensions; however, if other vendors with like resources are available to meet required timeframes, a new request should be initiated to replace the timing out resource.

### **Rest and Recouping Facilities (R&R)**

When days off are planned at or near the incident (between assignments), arrange for rest and recouping facilities that provide for:

- Eight hours of uninterrupted sleep
- Telephone for personal calls
- Facilities for showering and washing clothes
- A source of essential personal items
- Where practical, recreational opportunities may be provided such as television, video movies, etc.
- Sites that provide the above needs at least cost should be selected

### **Demobilization**

**Southwest Area Demobilization Guidelines and Incident Release Priorities** - In Southwest Area Preparedness Levels 1 and 2, the incident/host dispatch will work with the Southwest Coordination Center in determining release priorities.

In Southwest Area Preparedness Levels 3 through 5, the incident/host dispatch office shall attempt to give 24 hours advance notice to the Southwest Coordination Center for release of non-local resources. The following incident release priorities will generally apply, unless notified of change by the Southwest Coordination Center:

1. Local initial attack
2. National and regional shared resources
3. Out of geographic area resources
4. Out of Zone Southwest agency and cooperator resources\*
5. Southwest agreement/call-when-needed resources\*
6. Type 2 crews/contract resources\*

1       \*Depending on the current and predicted level of activity, the Southwest  
2       Coordination Center may advise the incident/host dispatch of changes to the above  
3       priorities. There are times when out-of-area and call-when-needed resources may be  
4       released first when predicted future needs are minimal.

5       The Southwest Coordination Center will work with the agency/incident host dispatch  
6       office and incident management team to coordinate the release priorities for resources  
7       assigned to Southwest incidents. When determining release priorities, several factors  
8       will be considered, including (but not limited to):

- 9       • Safety and Cost — The Southwest will minimize instances when out of geographic  
10      area resources get released home after short duration assignments. Attempts  
11      should be made to keep these resources for the duration of the incident and look  
12      for potential reassignments within the Southwest so as to minimize travel  
13      exposure and cost.
- 14     • Significant Fire Potential — Depending on fuel conditions and predicted weather,  
15      the SWCC will work with the host unit to make decisions on out-of-area resources  
16      on whether to retain them on an incident/preposition order for anticipated needs  
17      or release the resource home.
- 18     • Agency Objectives — There are times when agency objectives related to cost,  
19      training, opportunities, local knowledge, severity resource utilization, etc., may  
20      influence incident release priorities. Particularly in preparedness levels 3 through  
21      5, these agency objectives must be communicated to the Southwest Coordination  
22      Center

### 23       **Southwest Area Zone Operating Plans, Initial Attack, and Mutual Aid Agreements**

24      Specific agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOU) with each Southwest  
25      Area Zone are kept on file with that zone/dispatch center. The purpose of this section is  
26      to outline the minimum requirements for the operation of fire management activities  
27      within a zone/dispatch center. These are as follows (but are not limited to):

- 28      • Memorandum of understanding for the operation and management of the zone  
29      and the formation of a Zone Coordinating Group
- 30      • Operating plan for the dispatch center(s) within the zone to include agreements  
31      between the agencies in how the center is to be funded and dispatch support to  
32      the agencies within the zone
- 33      • Mutual Aid/Initial Attack Agreements between the agencies/cooperators within  
34      the zone for fire suppression (where applicable)
- 35      • Delegation of Authority to the Dispatch Center Manager signed by the Zone  
36      Coordinating Group outlining authorities within the center
- 37      • Radio Frequency Use Agreements (where applicable)

- Facilities agreements as necessary to include dispatch centers, agency facilities, aviation/crew facilities, mobilization centers, lookouts, etc.

### **Joint Powers Master Agreements**

The purpose of the Wildland Fire Management Joint Powers Master Agreements are to document the agencies' commitment to improve efficiency by facilitating the coordination and exchange of personnel, equipment, supplies, services, and funds among the agencies for management of wildland fires, presidential declared emergencies, and disasters or other emergencies under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's authority. The States of Arizona and New Mexico each have agreements in place with Federal agencies. These agreements are located on the SWA Web site at:

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/administrative/incident\\_business/incident\\_business.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/administrative/incident_business/incident_business.htm)

### **Ordering Between Local Offices Across GACC Boundaries**

Local dispatch centers adjacent to one another may engage in resource ordering across GACC boundaries. Formal agreements or MOUs will be required if there is any exchange of funds or a need for cross-billing authorities.

Local dispatch centers will work with their local fire management organizations to determine the type of resources (for example, single overhead resources, hand crews, equipment) and/or type of incidents (for example, initial attack/mutual aid, prescribed burning activities, natural resource work) that would be available to support neighboring zones.

The sending GACC must grant approval to the local center before any National or Geographic type resources are sent across GACC boundaries. Additional approval will be required as dictated by geographic and national preparedness levels and incident/resource prioritization.

Resources sent across GACC boundaries cannot be reassigned without prior approval from the sending GACC and the sending local unit. In some geographic areas, initial attack resources may require a resource order if extended beyond the first operational period.

### **Forest Service R-1/R-3 Agreement**

An intra-agency agreement has been signed between Regions 1 and 3 of the USFS and allows for resource exchange to supplement fire management capability. Normal dispatch ordering channels will be followed through the ROSS system.



## **BLM Direct Exchange of Resources**

Direct exchange of resources is made between BLM districts throughout the West. Response areas vary, but will usually involve movement of resources from areas of low risk to areas of high fire danger. The BLM sending units are responsible for notifying the next higher dispatch level of resource commitment as soon as possible after dispatch.

## **BIA Direct Exchange of Resources**

The BIA Director, National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is delegated authority for the assignment and movement of Bureau personnel and equipment to meet fire emergency needs and is authorized to approve expenditures chargeable to emergency fire suppression and rehabilitation funds. The BIA Regional Directors for the Western Region (Phoenix), Navajo Region, and Southwestern Region (Albuquerque) have delegated authority to transfer personnel and equipment to reservations where the fire load is temporarily excessive for the local personnel. The Western, Navajo, and Southwestern Regions encompass New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. The movement of resources to meet agency needs should flow from the regional office to agency, where resource orders will be initiated and processed through normal channels.

## **NPS Dispatching Procedures**

Dispatch of individual park suppression personnel and equipment to locations out of the initial attack area will be through the appropriate dispatch center in response to specific resource orders. On rare occasions, the NPS Regional FMO may request the dispatch of resources directly through a park. In these instances, the FMO will be responsible for notifying the appropriate dispatch center of the movement of NPS resources. Parks are to refuse a dispatch request which comes from any other source.

## **International Agreement with Mexico**

The purpose of this agreement is to establish a joint program to prevent and fight forest fires along the international border between Sonora, Mexico, and the Coronado National Forest in Arizona in order to protect life, property, and natural resources from forest fires and at the same time to minimize the costs incurred in fighting the fires. The fires referred to are those which have started in Mexico and tend to spread or continue toward the United States, or that start in the United States and spread into Mexico, threatening the forest resources of either country. Operating plans are in place to deal with these incidents and increase efficiencies in working with Mexico.

## **National Guard/Military Support**

The Joint Powers Master Agreements for Arizona and New Mexico provide general information on use of the National Guard.

### **Use of National Guard Units**

National Guard facilities, personnel, or equipment shall be requested through ROSS for all fire support missions. Regardless of the National Guard units used, the requesting agency must assign a qualified liaison officer to work with the National Guard Officer-in-Charge. The using agency is responsible for reimbursing the National Guard unit(s) for fuel, oil, parts, and repair of damages to National Guard equipment.

**Arizona** - All requests for Arizona National Guard resources will be ordered through the Arizona Dispatch Center to Arizona State Forestry. An informational copy of the resource order must be sent to the SWCC.

**New Mexico** - Except for units within the Santa Fe Zone, all requests for National Guard assistance will be placed through channels to the SWCC. The SWCC shall place all resource orders for National Guard assistance with the Santa Fe Interagency Dispatch Center to New Mexico State Forestry. Units within the Santa Fe Zone may place orders directly with the Santa Fe Interagency Dispatch Center, which will make the request to New Mexico State Forestry and inform the SWCC.

### **Military Support**

Specific channels between the Southwest Area and military organizations have been established. Maintaining these channels will do much to alleviate problems that can develop when units call military organizations direct.

**White Sands Missile Range** - The Alamogordo Interagency Dispatch Center has established contacts and works directly with Holloman Air Force Base which has jurisdiction over the White Sands Missile Range.

**Fort Bliss Military Reservation** - The Silver City Interagency Dispatch Center has established contacts and works directly with Fort Bliss Army Headquarters.

**Fort Huachuca Military Reservation** - The Tucson Interagency Dispatch Center has established contacts and works directly with Fort Huachuca Army Headquarters.

Where mutual plans for support have been made locally with military units, dispatch centers may request or provide assistance direct. Normally, requests will not be made to the military until all civilian and National Guard resources of the type needed have been committed. Units will notify the SWCC when requests for assistance are received from military organizations or when military resources are committed to an incident.

1 Requests for military assistance not covered by appropriate letters of agreement will be  
2 documented on a resource order form and submitted through the SWCC to the NICC. At  
3 the time of request, the following information must be furnished:

- 4 • Situation - This will include information on the type of incident, location,  
5 resources threatened, personnel, aircraft, and equipment presently committed
- 6 • Planned mission for the military
- 7 • What is needed for the military
- 8 • Agency liaison (Military Liaison Officer) with the military. Include liaison's name,  
9 title, and telephone number for contact
- 10 • Provider of billeting facilities for the military
- 11 • Specify time and known location where the Military Liaison Officer and military  
12 can meet to proceed to incident camp or staging area

13 A Military Liaison Officer will be assigned to each military unit. The Military Liaison  
14 Officer will be well qualified and familiar with fire or other incident operations as well as  
15 communication procedures. Liaison officers assigned to military aviation units will be  
16 carefully selected for their air operations knowledge. They should have no other duties  
17 to detract from the assignment. On advice from the incident agency, the SWCC shall  
18 select the Military Liaison Officer to be assigned.

19 The military shall provide necessary support to keep their equipment operational. Any  
20 special materials and/or supplies needed for the military assistance required should be  
21 determined at the time of request.

22 Requests for military helicopters will be made only when all agency charter or contract  
23 helicopters are insufficient, unsuitable, or not readily available.

24 The appropriate Agency Aviation Officer will establish procedures to ensure that  
25 qualifications of military personnel and equipment used will be equal to the minimum  
26 standard required by the agency. In addition, the National Helicopter Operations Study  
27 requires that all "other agency" helicopters must meet agency standards. This includes  
28 military helicopters. Briefing of the military on arrival is the responsibility of the unit air  
29 officer. Incoming military personnel will be briefed on:

- 30 • Existing weather conditions
- 31 • Mission requirements
- 32 • Manifesting and downloading requirements
- 33 • Heliport/helispot locations
- 34 • Communications requirements
- 35 • Pilot flight time limitations
- 36 • Facilities: messing, berthing, fueling, etc.

1 The unit dispatch office shall acquire the aircraft empty weights and a list of pilots to be  
2 compared with the approved list and pass to the Air Support Group Supervisor.

3 All personnel shall do everything possible to assist in maintaining a good integrated and  
4 coordinated working relationship between military and agency personnel.

### 5 **Memorandum of Agreement, USDA-USDI, Law Enforcement**

6 This MOA provides for the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, Bureau of  
7 Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service to be able to cross-designate law  
8 enforcement powers from any of the above agencies to law enforcement personnel  
9 from any of the other agencies under certain specified conditions.

10 The exercise cross-designation under this agreement is limited to: (1) investigative  
11 operations; (2) security or law enforcement operations during wildland fires or other  
12 major events or incidents; and (3) emergency assistance calls. Upon official request from  
13 one agency to another agency for law enforcement assistance, all law enforcement  
14 personnel sent to that incident will be automatically empowered with the enforcement  
15 powers of the requesting agency.

16 Requests by the Bureau of Indian Affairs are subject to enactment of additional  
17 enforcement authority currently pending in Congress.

### 18 **Southwest Area Preparedness Level Plan**

19 Wildland fire management agencies are directed to protect life, property, and the  
20 natural and cultural resources they manage. This requires attention to the availability  
21 and use of firefighting resources. Preparedness levels will be utilized by all wildland fire  
22 management agencies within the Southwest to guide the readiness of fire resources.  
23 These preparedness levels provide interagency coordination of pre-suppression,  
24 suppression, and fire management capabilities.

25 This plan serves three primary functions:

- 26 1. To coordinate workforce and equipment needs for planned and unplanned  
27 wildfires.
- 28 2. To ensure that fire management activities are integrated and coordinated with  
29 Southwest Area and national needs.
- 30 3. To ensure coordinated step-up activities are efficient and proportional to fire  
31 hazard, risk, and the overall situation complexity.

## Definitions

**Predictive Services Areas (PSAs)** - Regions of roughly similar fuels, weather, and topography where a statistical correlation has been established between historical fire occurrence and selected NFDRS stations. There are 16 PSAs in the Southwest.

**Significant Fire Potential** - The likelihood a fire situation will require mobilization of additional resources from outside the area in which the fire situation originates. This can be applied to PSAs, dispatch zones, and/or geographic area.

**SWA 3-Day Average Severity Curve** - The Energy Release Component (ERC), derived from representative NFDRS stations throughout the area, is averaged over each 3-day period to obtain an area-wide, 3-day average severity curve.

**Wildland Fire** – Any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Wildland fires are categorized into two distinct types:

- Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions or prescribed fires that are declared wildfires
- Prescribed fires – Planned ignitions

**7-Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook** - A 7-day outlook of significant fire potential for each of the Southwest Area PSAs which integrates fuels and weather information into classifications related directly to the potential for significant fire activity. The table below relates historical fire occurrence and probabilities for significant fire activity to the outlook classifications.

Fire Potential Color Classification	Significant Fire Risk Description	Historical Significant Fires in Color Class	Chance of Significant Fire (Given 100 or More Ignitions)
Green (Moist)	Little or none	9%	≤3%
Yellow (Dry)	Low	30%	7%
Brown (Very Dry)	Moderate	60%	13%
Red (High Risk)	High	1%	20% (estimated)

**Fire Preparedness Level Determination Procedures** - The Southwest Coordination Center Manager will use this plan to guide the setting of the overall preparedness level (PL) for the Southwest Area, but consult with the SWCG during PLs 3-5. Preparedness levels are basically determined by:

- Condition of the fuels and their resultant burning characteristics

- Existing and forecast significant fire potential, weather patterns
- Fire activity, prescribed and wildland, both within and outside the Southwest Area
- Resource availability, within and outside the Southwest Area

**National Preparedness Levels** may suggest that Southwest Area preparedness levels be raised due to a large number of resources being out of the area and unavailable for Southwest response.

**Using the Plan** - Each preparedness level requires specific actions, assigned to certain positions or organizations. Once a preparedness level has been established, the responsible individuals will carry out their assignments without further notification. Each SWCG member will be responsible to coordinate the activities triggered by the preparedness level, upon the lands and staffing within their agency's jurisdiction. The Southwest Area Predictive Services Unit will monitor Southwest factors daily. When Preparedness Levels 1 and 2 are exceeded, the Predictive Services Unit Leader will consult with the SWCC Center Manager, who will initiate more careful evaluation of the situation and take or recommend appropriate actions.

**Special Prescribed Fire Direction** - The contingency plan is the portion of the prescribed fire plan that considers possible but unlikely events, and the contingency resources and actions needed to mitigate those events. The contingency plan will establish management action points or limits that indicate when additional holding resources and actions are needed. The Rx Burn Boss will verify and document the availability of identified contingency resources and response time on the day of implementation. If contingency resources availability falls below plan levels, actions must be taken to secure operations until identified contingency resources are replaced. While contingency resources may be identified for more than one prescribed fire, the local fire management organization(s) must evaluate and document adequacy of all contingency resources in the area. Once a contingency resource is committed to a specific wildland fire action (wildfire or prescribed fire), it can no longer be considered a contingency resource for another prescribed fire project, and a suitable replacement contingency resource must be identified or the ignition halted. The dispatch center should be included in the list of planned contingency resources. (See "Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide," November 2013, page 34).

### **Preparedness Level Determination**

Preparedness Levels (PL) in the Southwest are derived from a 2 tiered approach. These can be summed up by measuring the following:

- **What is occurring?** This includes measuring fire business such as fire activity, Incident Management Team (IMT), and Type 1 (IHC)/T-2IA commitments.



- **What could occur?** This includes measuring significant fire potential and fire danger indices within individual Predictive Service Areas (PSA's) and how these relate to the probability of fire business.

The Criterium Decision program uses the criteria below and is weighted by importance to their contribution to the overall PL for the Southwest Area. "What is occurring" will initially govern the PL; however, "What could occur" has an important influence on shifts in PL either up or down, but can also play an important role even in the absence or change in fire business. The following are guidelines in how to measure these criteria for input into the model and are to be used as a tool only. After each criterion below are identified and measured, a recommended PL Level (scoring output from the model) is given to SWCG for approval.

### **What is occurring?**

- **Fire Activity (Contributing to Fire Business)**

**Minimum** = little to no fire activity

**Low** = fire occurrence usually contained in 1 burning period and is successfully managed with local resources

**Moderate** = daily initial attack in some areas and with some incidents burning more than 1 burning period and non-local resources are needed to assist.

**High** = most areas experiencing new incidents daily and fires over 100 acres are common. Resource needs across zone boundaries are frequent with some support from outside the Geographic Area.

**Maximum** = new incident Initial Attack capability is compromised due to ongoing large fire activity and lack of resources. Resource requests from outside the Geographic area are common.

- **IHC Crew Commitments (Within the Southwest Area)\***

**Minimum** = No IHC Crew commitment

**Low** = Occasional commitment of IHC Crews

**Moderate** = About 1/2 of SWA IHC Crews regularly committed

**High** = Most SWA IHC Crews are committed regularly with some out of area IHC Crews needed

**Maximum** = All SWA IHC Crews are committed, out of area assistance of IHC crews is high

\*Note- outside of the April-September timeframe, T-2IA Crew resource commitments will be utilized for purposes of measuring fire business.

- **IMT Commitments (Within the Southwest Area)\***

**Minimum** = No IMT commitment

**Low** = Some commitment of T3 IMTs

**Moderate** = 1-3 T-1 or 2 IMTs committed

**High** = Most IMTs being utilized regularly

**Maximum** = All IMTs are committed, out of area assistance needed

## What could occur?

- **7 Day Outlook/Fire Potential Trend**

**Minimum** = All PSA's in Green/Yellow with no increase in potential in the period

**Low** = No more than 25% of PSA's in Brown with infrequent High Risk Events

**Moderate** = Approximately half of PSA's are in Brown or High Risk Events

**High** = 75% of PSA's are in Brown or High Risk Events

**Maximum** = All or most PSA's *consistently* in Brown and High Risk days are common

- **PSA ERC(g) Indices**

**Minimum** = No PSA's in Red (above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile)

**Low** = 25% of PSA's in Red (or expected to be in Red within a 3 day period)

**Moderate** = 50% of PSA's in Red (or expected to be in Red within a 3 day period)

**High** = 75% of PSA's in Red (or expected to be in Red within a 3 day period)

**Maximum** = >90% of PSA's in Red (or expected to be in Red within a 3 day period)

## Preparedness Level 1

**Description - Conditions are not conducive for frequent large fire growth in most of the geographic area. Winter or rain conditions or green fuel conditions predominate. Normal fire resource staffing is adequate.**

In general, the adjective ratings for identified criteria are at a minimum or low. When in Preparedness Level 1, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG, SWCC, Zone Coordinating Groups, and Dispatch Centers including but not limited to:

### SWCG

- ✓ Recruit/select staff for Incident Management Teams
- ✓ Review and update annual operating plans for the state master agreements
- ✓ Delegate authority to the SWCC Center Manager to carry out interagency functions at the SWCC
- ✓ Review and revise the SWCG handbook

### SWCC

- ✓ Review and update the SWCC Operations Guide and provide update to the SWCG for comments. Lead and coordinate the annual revision of the Southwest Area Mobilization Guide
- ✓ Preposition National fire radio cache systems at Silver City and Prescott
- ✓ Review and make recommendations on operating plans for mobilization centers in the Southwest Area
- ✓ Review, revise, or develop memorandums of understanding or agreements between the Southwest Area and other geographic areas as needed

- ✓ Follow up with dispatch centers to assure preseason agreements are completed; provide assistance where needed
- ✓ Monitor weekly situation reports, fire activity levels, and resource availability
- ✓ Notify the NICC, Southwest Area dispatch centers, and the SWCG of any major incidents
- ✓ Participate in zone fire preparedness staff inspections throughout the Southwest Area

### **Zone Coordinating Groups**

- ✓ Organize Type 3 management organizations, encourage interagency IMT involvement by zone firefighters
- ✓ As needed, review and update zone annual operating plans and provide copies to the SWCC
- ✓ Delegate authority to the zone center manager to manage the dispatch center and implement annual operating plans

### **Dispatch Center Managers**

- ✓ Review Dispatch Center Operating Plan with the Zone Coordinating Group and make recommendations as necessary
- ✓ As needed, develop zone Interagency Hotshot Crew and Southwestern Forest Fire Fighter Crew rotation schedules
- ✓ Develop and maintain seasonal fire severity charts, pocket cards
- ✓ Assure preseason agreements are completed, provide assistance where needed
- ✓ Inform the SWCC daily of any occurring or planned prescribed fires and resource commitments to these treatments
- ✓ Notify the SWCC and involved Southwest Area dispatch centers of major incidents
- ✓ Prioritize fire management actions to optimize suppression effectiveness within the zone

## **Preparedness Level 2**

***Description - Resources within local dispatch areas are adequate. Potential exists for some mobilization of additional resources from other local dispatch areas. Fire behavior is generally low to moderate. Some minor support to the National Response Plan may be occurring.***

In general, the adjective ratings for identified criteria are within a minimum to moderate range.

When in Preparedness Level 2, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG, SWCC, Zone Coordinating Groups, and Dispatch Centers including but not limited to (in addition to items in PL1):

### **SWCG**

- ✓ Ensure Type 1 Incident Management Team Southwest on-call schedule is active

- ✓ Coordinate the issuance of press releases that highlight interagency current conditions and a brief outlook
- ✓ Consider “normality” of fire season and if early/late activation of Type 2 IMTs are warranted

### **SWCC**

- ✓ As needed, activate 7-day operations for the SWCC
- ✓ Expand the SWCC operations to provide proper staffing as needed
- ✓ Initiate submission of daily area situation report
- ✓ Compile and distribute resource availability within the Southwest Area, daily or weekly, as necessary
- ✓ Contact National Weather Service offices to activate twice daily fire weather forecasts
- ✓ As needed, initiate and maintain Area-wide Severity Chart, SIT300 (IMT and Crews), and SIT300A (Aviation), Morning Intelligence Report, News & Notes, and ROSS reports.
- ✓ Utilize SWCC staff to perform and distribute preseason risk assessments during periods of escalating risk going into the fire season

### **Zone Coordinating Groups**

- ✓ Consider activating intelligence specialist(s) for zone
- ✓ Coordinate the issuance of press releases that highlight current interagency conditions and a brief outlook
- ✓ Ensure interagency coordination of incidents is occurring

### **Dispatch Center Managers**

- ✓ Consider activation of 7-day operations of the dispatch center. Expand dispatch center operations to provide for proper staffing as needed
- ✓ Ensure computer software is up to date, there is sufficient support to keep computers and telecommunications operational, and that backup systems are in place to prevent disruption during busy periods
- ✓ Compile and submit daily zone situation report
- ✓ Initiate conference calls if needed to members of the Zone Coordinating Group to discuss the situation. Frequency of the conference calls and/or meetings will be determined by the Zone Coordinating Group
- ✓ Monitor area-wide severity index with increased attention to an upward trend
- ✓ Encourage interagency coordination of severity requests

### **Preparedness Level 3**

***Description - Resources within some local dispatch areas are short, requiring frequent mobilization of additional SW and national resources. Large fires occurring frequently and potential for IMT mobilization is regularly present. Fire behavior is generally moderate to high, and is of concern to local agencies and fire managers.***

1 In general, the adjective ratings for identified criteria are within a low to high range.

## 2 **Management Direction/Consideration**

3 Agencies wishing to proceed with an incident strategy other than full suppression will  
4 notify and coordinate with the SWCG. The final decision to implement resides with the  
5 implementing agency.

6 If the agency decides to implement, incident strategies must consider the short and  
7 long-term resource requirements for all new and existing wildland fires (planned and  
8 unplanned) to ensure efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.

9 When in Preparedness Level 3, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG,  
10 SWCC, Zone Coordinating Groups, and Dispatch Centers including but not limited to (in  
11 addition to items in PL1 and PL2):

## 12 **SWCG**

- 13 ✓ Consider establishing interagency fire information specialist(s) for the SWCC
- 14 ✓ Consider establishing the SWCC training coordinator to work with zones and  
15 incidents to direct and place geographic area trainees to facilitate accelerated  
16 training experiences
- 17 ✓ Initiate requests for state or regional level severity funds
- 18 ✓ Consider activation of MAC Group if resource competition, incident workload, or  
19 agency interests indicate need
- 20 ✓ Consider designation of ready reserve firefighting resources if situations are  
21 escalating or resources are short
- 22 ✓ Consider funding and use of cooperative fire prevention/education team(s)
- 23 ✓ Work with agencies to stage or place critical resources in high risk areas
- 24 ✓ Individual members monitor agency incidents and collaborate with SWCG  
25 members as needed

## 26 **SWCC**

- 27 ✓ Operate SWCC on extended staffing, as needed
- 28 ✓ Prioritize fire suppression actions to optimize suppression effectiveness by using  
29 appropriate logistical strategies
- 30 ✓ Initiate conference calls to members of the SWCG to discuss current situations if  
31 they are complex. Frequency of the conference calls and/or meetings will be  
32 determined by the group.
- 33 ✓ MAC group activation may be indicated
- 34 ✓ Monitor implementation of fire restrictions and closures throughout the  
35 Southwest Area
- 36 ✓ Monitor the status of all fire aircraft
- 37 ✓ Work with agencies on SEAT placement and needs
- 38 ✓ Maintain at least two hotshot crews per state for initial attack support

- ✓ Activate a Southwest Fire Behavior Analyst (FBAN) at the SWCC if helpful, based upon need and severity. Maintain general awareness of WFDSS activities as related to area prioritization and incident potential
- ✓ Coordinate conference calls with all center managers
- ✓ Maintain daily communication/coordination calls with all IMTs on active incidents. Monitor accelerating T3 incidents
- ✓ Determine seasonal availability dates of SWFF and T2 crews
- ✓ Monitor the availability status of Southwest Type 1 IHC crews
- ✓ Notify SWCG Chair and SWCG members of the escalating situation if it appears that the PL will go beyond PL-3

### Zone Coordinating Groups

- ✓ Encourage and coordinate interagency requests for severity funds as parameters allow
- ✓ Initiate, as needed, fire restrictions and closures and associated interagency coordination procedures
- ✓ Maintain close coordination for all incidents, including resource commitments and needs

### Dispatch Center Managers

- ✓ As needed, operate dispatch center on extended staffing
- ✓ Through Zone Coordinating Group, monitor the implementation of fire restrictions and closures
- ✓ Prepare daily morning management briefing paper

### Preparedness Level 4

***Description - Resources are fully and frequently being mobilized in some areas; initial attack is unsuccessful on a daily basis. Aviation resources are critical to success. Some dispatch areas are extremely busy and IMT fires occurring regularly. Resources have to be actively managed and agencies consulted regularly. Fire behavior is generally high to extreme; threats to life and property may be high and is of concern to local agencies and fire managers.***

In general, the adjective ratings for identified criteria are within a moderate to maximum range.

### Management Direction/Consideration

Agencies wishing to proceed with an incident strategy other than full suppression will notify and coordinate with the SWCG. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

If the agency decides to implement, incident strategies must consider the short and long-term resource requirements for all new and existing wildland fires (planned and unplanned) to ensure efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.



**Prescribed fire application** can be continued or be initiated if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities, and include feedback from the SWCG. The SWCG provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a prescribed fire application. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

When in Preparedness Level 4, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG, SWCC, Zone Coordinating Groups, and Dispatch Centers including but not limited to (in addition to items in PL1, PL2, and PL3):

#### **SWCG**

- ✓ Prioritize fire suppression actions to optimize suppression effectiveness within the Southwest Area.
- ✓ Activate MAC to assist SWCC and Fire Managers in allocation/re-allocation decisions
- ✓ The SWCG or Southwest Area MAC Group will manage the assignment of all Incident Management Teams within the Southwest; Type 2 teams will normally be kept within the geographic area when the SW is at PL-4 and above. Consider the prepositioning of IMTs or other critical resources, especially in escalating risk situations. Designate ready reserve resources if firefighting resource shortages are developing. Consider requiring incident release advance notification for firefighting resources, pending active reassignments
- ✓ Consider requesting agency management to make all non-critical, fire qualified staff available for fire support in the Southwest; especially if it appears there will be an extended period of escalating and increasing fire activity with resource shortages

#### **SWCC**

- ✓ Request SWCG activate the MAC when complex fire incidents, resource competition, agency issues, or other complexities develop. Coordinate conference line, MAC room, activation of MAC group coordinator, and other specialists in consultation with SWCG chair
- ✓ Notify the NICC and all SWA dispatch centers when MAC Group is operational. Notify Incident Commanders of call-in protocols, reporting template
- ✓ Preposition additional initial attack resources in strategic locations
- ✓ Provide SWCG/MAC with current resource availability, assignments, and potential shortages
- ✓ Ensure that adequate coverage of all essential SWCC functions is occurring for long duration stays at PL-4 and 5. Ensure the SWCC and zones have adequate trainees to develop personnel for the future staffing of centers



## Zone Coordinating Groups

- ✓ Carefully consider and receive regional or state office approval, for any initiation or continuance of prescribed fires
- ✓ Active zones may need to convene mini-MAC groups to prioritize resources and actions on fires. Regular consultation with the SWCG liaison and SWCC center manager is needed
- ✓ Determine interagency need for additional area closures and restrictions
- ✓ Ensure Zone Coordinating Group chair or acting is continuously available to zone center manager(s), agency representatives, and SWCG agency liaison. Consider extra help if agency representatives availability is overtaxed due to local fire activity

## Preparedness Level 5

***Description - Fire resources throughout the SW Area are fully committed. Higher level of initial attack is unsuccessful. Use of aviation resources is essential for initial attack and large fire support. Numerous dispatch areas are at full operational level. Most or all SW IMTs are in use. Fire behavior is generally high to extreme; threats to life and property may be high and is of major concern to local agencies and fire managers.***

In general, the adjective ratings for identified criteria are within a high to maximum range.

## Management Direction/Consideration

Agencies wishing to proceed with an incident strategy other than full suppression will notify and coordinate with the SWCG and the Geographic Area NMAC Representative. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

If the agency decides to implement, incident strategies must consider the short and long-term resource requirements for all new and existing wildland fires (planned and unplanned) to ensure efficient resource utilization for identified priorities.

**Prescribed fire application** can be initiated or continued if the proposed action is approved by an agency at the regional or state office level and local resources are available to carry out the application without additional outside resource needs. This approval must be based on an assessment of risk, impacts of the proposed actions on area resources and activities, and include feedback from the SWCG. The SWCG provides information or perspectives to agencies wishing to proceed with or implement a prescribed fire application.

For prescribed fire application to be initiated or continued that requires additional support of resources from outside the GACC, a National MAC representative must

1 assess risk and impacts of the proposed action and present to NMAC for review prior to  
2 proceeding. The final decision to implement resides with the implementing agency.

3 When in Preparedness Level 5, the following are items to be considered by the SWCG,  
4 SWCC, Zone Coordinating Groups, and Dispatch Centers including but not limited to (in  
5 addition to items in PL1, PL2, PL3, and PL4):

#### 6 **SWCG**

- 7 ✓ Activate MAC to assist SWCC and Fire Managers in allocation/re-allocation
- 8 decisions
- 9 ✓ Add Military or National Guard Liaison to MAC Group if military or national guard
- 10 is activated
- 11 ✓ Consider establishing MAC and FEMA representative relationship
- 12 ✓ Consider contacts/involvement with state level Homeland Security Departments
- 13 ✓ Continue to preposition Incident Management Teams, ready reserve, or critical
- 14 resources as needed
- 15 ✓ Take additional steps to assure that all Agency Administrators are advised of all
- 16 current and predicted activities
- 17 ✓ Ensure Southwest liaison to NMAC is informed and up to date so that national
- 18 level help is available and coordinated
- 19 ✓ Conduct close monitoring of Southwest Area resources to assure that they are
- 20 getting appropriate rest and recovery time
- 21 ✓ Consider what help SW MAC can establish or offer to active agencies, zones,
- 22 dispatch centers, or zone coordinating/MAC groups to assist in their success

#### 23 **SWCC**

- 24 ✓ Identify and staff additional staging areas for IMTs and other resources, as
- 25 needed
- 26 ✓ Pay specific attention to fire information staffing at the geographic area level to
- 27 ensure media and political managers are getting updated and correct fire effort
- 28 information. Make suggestions to SW MAC if shortfalls are identified
- 29 ✓ Observe busy zone dispatch centers and suggest mobilization of additional
- 30 resources for help, if indicated.

